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Organizational communication and evaluation processes play a key role for organizations, as they are responsible for better individual performance and consequently for greater organizational effectiveness (Proctor & Doukakis, 2003). In general, organizational communication may be defined as a way of disseminating information that enables coordination and conclusion of tasks, decision-making and conflict resolution (Ayub, Manaf & Hamzah, 2014). On the other hand, performance evaluation may be generically defined as a continuous process of monitoring and management that allows correcting of certain behaviors (Hosain, 2016).

Over the years it has become clear that the traditional performance appraisal process (i.e., the top-down evaluation process in which the leader evaluates the subordinate) presents some limitations, such as non-confidentiality and quotation errors of the evaluators (Caetano, 2008). In this sense, it became necessary to promote other alternative forms of performance evaluation, such as the 360-degree performance evaluation.

The 360-degree evaluation, also known as multi-evaluator or multiperspective methodology (Hensel, Meijers, Leeden & Kessels, 2010, Sikes, Jestes, LeClair-Smith & Yates, 2015) or as multipoint feedback or complete circle (Gomes, Cunha, Rego, Cunha, Cardoso & Marques, 2008; Sikes et al., 2015) differs from the top-down performance evaluation, since it takes into account the perspective of different members of the organization. In this case, it is not only the supervisor who evaluates his subordinates, since subordinates also take an active role in this process. The circle of organizational members involved in the 360-degree evaluation seems to vary among the authors of the specialty. However, there is a consensus to include: the collaborator (i.e., self-evaluation); the peers (i.e., colleagues) and supervisor (s) / manager (eg Craig & Hannum, 2006, Nowack, 2009, Schullery et al., 2009) (Smither, London & Reilly, 2005).

The term "360-degree evaluation" or equivalent has been scientifically documented for about 25 years, and its most visible publication was that of Edwards & Ewen (1996) entitled "360-degree feedback: the powerful new model for employee Assessment and performance improvement in 1996" (Bracken & Church, 2013). However, the history of this type of feedback begins in World War II when the German

military brought together information from multiple sources to achieve performance evaluation (Fleenor & Prince, 1997). Since then, the concept of 360-degree feedback has gained some visibility and has become easier to implement because of the easier access to online (Sikes et al., 2015).

This type of evaluation has been used for several objectives, which may or may not co-occur, such as: customer satisfaction measure; Method of managing the development of organizational actors; Performance management and evaluation system (Bracken, Timmreck, & Church, 2000; Caetano, 2008). However, in the last 20 years it has been developing, essentially, as a performance evaluation tool. It is known that today a large number of organizations already use 360-degree evaluation as part of their evaluation systems, which is important for making decisions related to: task planning, selection of employees, development of organizational members (Bracken & Church, 2013). A benchmarking study conducted in 2013 with more than 200 North American organizations (3D Group, 2013) proved that of these 200 organizations, 47% of them already used the 360 -degree performance management assessment. That is, 15% more than in 2009 (cited in Bracken & Church, 2013). This issue has been taken into account, in the sense that the 360° evaluation is no longer only a developmental purpose, and is responsible for more relevant decision-making within the organization (Bracken & Church, 2013).

In terms of its application, the 360-degree evaluation involves a set of issues that should be considered. Firstly, the choice of instrument that should be used. In this case, the instrument will have to evaluate behaviors and not personality characteristics. There are two distinct ways of evaluating these behaviors. On the one hand, a qualitative approach can be adopted (i.e., evaluations carried out in text format). On the other hand, quantitative evaluations can be carried out (ie, evaluations carried out by indicating a certain numerical value) (Atwater & Brett, 2006; Carson, 2006; Espinilla, Andrés, Martínez & Martínez, 2011; Richardson, 2010). After selecting the evaluation instrument, it is necessary to select the evaluators. It is usual to select 3 to 5 people to be involved (i.e., colleagues of the evaluated person) and 3 to 5 of their direct supervisors. The choice of peers tends to be realized by the evaluated ones, but the selection of the direct supervisors tends to be concretized by other organizational actors. Usually there are 10 people involved, in totality. After selecting the instrument and the evaluators, it is necessary to provide training to those who will give and receive feedback in order to make it more constructive and to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of this process. Finally, the data are analyzed and interpreted. At this stage, a facilitator, also called mentor and/coach, is used. Thus, evaluators and facilitators participate in follow-up sessions (ie, discuss possible ways to improve the performance of the evaluated people) to create development plans for better future performance (Atwater & Brett, 2006; Carson, 2006, Letchfield & Bourn, 2011, Richardson, 2010). In order to verify an evolution of the evaluated individuals, the 360-degree evaluation should be applied again 6 to 12 months after its last application (Richardson, 2010). It should also be noted that the evaluation process usually takes place through the use of a computer medium, since the evaluation questionnaires are completed via Internet and the analysis also tends to be carried out through the use of computers (Espinilla et al., 2011; Letchfield & Bourn, 2011). However, the number of

people involved in the 360° evaluation is not consensual at the literature, because it depends on the organizational context in which this type of evaluation is applied and the purposes of the evaluation. It is known that for acceptable process reliability, and for the development of employees, the number of participants should be 10. However, most companies promote the involvement of only 3 individuals in this type of evaluation. This is because they consider that this number may already be sufficient when it comes to administrative purposes, not considering the development of employees in terms of performance per se (Hensel et al., 2010).

As a management and performance evaluation system, some authors propose the presence of certain factors for this type of evaluation to be successful: relevant contents, through the use of clear, personalized and Credible data, by the previous condition and by a sufficient number of evaluators, properly trained duly trained; Accounting and measurability; (Bracken et al., 2001; Bracken & Rose, 2011); Anonymity and confidentiality; Access to "follow ups" by those involved; Development of plans of action and regularity in the application of this methodology (Bracken et al., 2001). The importance of the training of the individuals involved in the 360° evaluation has been strongly emphasized by several authors, since it allows the evaluators to become better observers and reporters (Bracken & Rose, 2011; Kline & Sulsky, 2009), to know what behaviors to adopt (Seifert, McDonald & Yukl, 2003) and perceive the necessary aspects to the motivation of the employees with regard to the operationalization of changes (Craig & Hannum, 2006). It should be noted that the investment in the training of the evaluators increases the acceptance and the confidence in this type of evaluation by the evaluated ones (Becton & Schraeder, 2004). In addition, it avoids any errors and distortions of the evaluations (McCarthy & Garavan, 2001) and, consequently, increases the quality and effectiveness of the 360° evaluation (Gagnon, 2000; Seifert et al., 2003).

Taking into account the aspects mentioned above, it may be considered that the 360-degree evaluation will be advantageous when compared to the traditional/top-down performance evaluation. However, in this case only questions related to the operationalization of the method were considered. It is necessary to understand how the 360° evaluation can be advantageous in terms of the communicative processes in the organizational sphere.

Contrary to what traditional currents defended, organizational communication may involve processes of interaction. These processes allow the transmission of ideas in a number of directions, namely, in an upward direction, in a downward direction and in a lateral direction, where the sender and the receiver of the message are assumed to have the same relevance in the organizational context (Almeida, 2003). In this sense, organizational communication may act at the level of all organizational actors (e.g. collaborators transmit information to clients, managers provide instructions to their supervisors) (Conrad & Poole, 2012). Therefore, in addition to vertical communication (i.e., between managers and subordinates), horizontal communication (i.e. between the various organizational actors) has also been developed. However, horizontal communication tends to be more applied in organizational contexts where there is a greater

sharing of power among professionals (Mamatoglu, 2008). This is because the structure of the organization plays a very relevant role in perceiving the type of communication adopted in organizations. In addition to the structure, the organizational culture also allows a greater understanding of the communication that is established among the organizational members. It is known that different cultures involve different assumptions and knowledge, contributing also to the acquisition of different meanings of the received messages (Duck & McMahan, 2012). In this context, in a communicative process, individuals may use a system of signs (verbal/ nonverbal) that are constituted as universal (e.g. emotions that express crying or smiling) or may be culture variables for culture (e.g. way of greeting) (Almeida et al., 2013).

It is known that in organizations whose cultures tend to be more collaborative and where there is a greater sharing of power tends to develop a specific type of communication that is called support communication. Generally speaking, supportive communication tends to be clear, precise, open and shared (Czech & Forward, 2010). Specifically, supportive communication has a set of characteristics that define it, like: description (i.e., supervisor communication is clear, describes situations fairly and presents their perceptions without implying the need for change); Problem orientation (i.e., supervisor defines problems rather than solutions, is open to discussion and does not insist on subordinate agreement); Spontaneity (i.e., communication is free and honest); Empathy (i.e., the supervisor perceives and listens to subordinates and respects their feelings and values); Equality (i.e., leadership does not try to make subordinates feel inferior, does not use status to control situations, and respects the position of others) (Larsen & Folger, 1993). It can be seen that in the case of supportive communication, opinions are easily accepted by others, becoming effective for the interpersonal relations that are established between organizational actors (Czech & Forward, 2010; Larsen & Folger, 1993).

In hierarchically marked organizational contexts, supervisors tend to develop another type of communication that is called defensive communication. In these cases, organizational actors feel intimidated when they communicate with their superiors, fearing to be punished for some reason. Specifically, defensive communication has a set of characteristics that define it, being: evaluation (i.e., the supervisor is critical and makes judgments, not accepting subordinates' explanations); Control (i.e., the management acts in a controlling manner); Strategy (i.e., the supervisor manipulates subordinates and misinterprets or distorts what they say); Neutrality (i.e., the superior provides little support to the subordinates and feels indifferent to the conflicts and problems they may have); Sense of superiority (i.e., the supervisor reminds subordinates that he/she is in charge, making them feel inadequate in their actions); Sense of certainty (i.e., the supervisor is dogmatic and unwilling to admit mistakes) (Larsen & Folger, 1993).

It can be realized that defensive communication contributes to more destructive interpersonal relationships in the organizational sphere. In addition, supervisors who adopt supportive communication are perceived as more competent than supervisors who adopt a defensive communication, which is reflected in an improvement in their relationship with their subordinates (Czech & Forward, 2010).

At the literature level, there has been an increase in the interest in studying issues related to communication between supervisors and subordinates, mainly due to the fulfillment of organizational objectives that it may allow (Steele & Plenty, 2015). Moreover, from the twenty-first century the vision of leaderships as a command and power holders has been changing; And this notion is replaced by the concepts of coach, mentor and facilitator (Johansson, 2015). For this same reason, the most recent companies have been looking for an organizational democracy in which all members are involved in decision making (Cunha & Rego, 2005). This organizational democracy may be related to the 360-degree evaluation, on the one hand and to the supportive communication, on the other hand. This because according to the aspects mentioned above, it can be perceived that the 360-degree evaluation tends to be applied in contexts where there is a greater sharing of power among its members. In addition, the supportive communication is adopted in less hierarchically marked organizational contexts.

Despite the growing interest in studying these issues, the investigations that relate 360-degree evaluation directly to organizational communication and, specifically, to the communication of supervisors are still scarce. It is known, however, that the 360-degree evaluation may be a facilitator of organizational communication, allowing greater proximity and trust among employees, since perceptions of power tend to change (i.e., more distributed power among organizational actors) (Mamatoglu, 2008). In this sense, organizations with a greater share of power use more often horizontal communication than vertical communication, and horizontal communication is a characteristic of 360-degree evaluation. This horizontal communication can develop what is called supportive communication, characteristic of collaborative organizational contexts (Mamatoglu, 2008).

Berkovich, (2014) argues that an organization may be more rigid (i.e., centralized and formal) or more flexible (i.e., more decentralized). However, supervisors engage in a more dialogue behaviour in flexible structures than in rigid structures. It is also known that the 360-degree evaluation is different from other forms of evaluation because it considers the evaluation of supervisors. In this sense, it is possible to perceive the supervisors' reactions to this evaluative method (Atwater & Brett, 2006), as well as to perceive their leadership style and consequently the type of communication adopted by them (Eckert, Ekelund, Gentry And Dawson, 2010). Finally, some studies point to the idea that the application of the 360-degree evaluation may have positive effects on the communication that is established among the members of the organization (Rai & Singh, 2013).

Considering the arguments above, the present study intends to understand how the application of the 360-degree evaluation may contribute to the adoption of a supportive communication, by the supervisors. In addition, it becomes important to understand what attitudes / behaviors subordinates may adopt (eg, commitment, satisfaction, trust, cynicism).

The main objective of this research is to develop a theoretical model of analysis about the type of communication adopted by supervisors, when implementing the 360-degree evaluation and what will be the

implications in certain attitudes and/or behaviors of employees. For this, my doctoral thesis presents different moments of data collection and analysis, with specific goals.

In an exploratory phase we want to perceive how Experts (University Teachers; Organizational Communication Trainers and Technicians responsible for internal communication management in their companies) understand, define and achieve the 360-degree evaluation and organizational communication. Thus, the objective of this qualitative exploratory study will be:

1 - Perceive the role of 360-degree evaluation in the scope of organizational communication, through the construction of a theoretical model of analysis.

In a second phase, we intend to understand the type of communication adopted by the supervisors during the 360-degree evaluation and what the attitudes and / or behaviors adopted by the subordinates. As such, we intend to carry out 2 quantitative studies, so that it is possible to analyze the theoretical model of analysis that we will construct with the information coming from the literature review and the analysis of the exploratory interviews. The achievement of these two quantitative studies has the following objectives:

2 - Understand the type of communication adopted by the supervisors, when applying the 360-degree evaluation. In this sense, it becomes relevant to understand if the supervisors adopt a supportive communication or a defensive communication.

3 - Understand the attitudes and behaviors (eg, commitment, satisfaction, trust and cynicism) adopted by subordinates in the context of this communication.

In my doctoral thesis I will take into account three main research questions that are directly related to the research objectives:

- What is the role of 360-degree evaluation in organizational communication and, specifically, in the communication of supervisors?

- What are the attitudes and/or behaviors assumed by employees when implementing the 360-degree evaluation?

- What are the attitudes and/or behaviors of employees in 360-degree evaluation influenced by the type of communication adopted by the supervisors?

In this particular case, I will focus only on the first study that has already been carried out, which is related to the first objective of this research.

A qualitative exploratory study was carried out through semi-structured interviews with experts: 11 university professors in the area of organizational communication / Public Relations / Human Resources Management (n = 11; 33.3%); 11 trainers in the area of organizational communication / Public Relations /

Human Resources Management (n = 11; 33.3%) and 11 communication managers (n = 11; 33.3%); 10 men (30.3%) and 23 women (69.7%). These were between the ages of 21 and 71, with a mean age of 41.9 years (SD =). All interviewees had Portuguese nationality (n = 33, 100%), most of them from the District of Lisbon (n = 17, 51.5%). As far as literacy was concerned, most of the participants mentioned having postgraduate studies (n = 27, 81.8%), of which 27, 7 of them (21.2%) specified to have a Doctor degree and 5 of them (15.2%) reported having a Master degree. In addition, 5 (15.2%) of the participants have a degree and only 1 (3.03%) of them had not completed higher studies. Regarding the qualification area, it should be noted that it was not always possible to interview people specifically from the area of Communication Sciences. In this sense, it was verified that although the majority belonged to the Communication area (n = 22, 66.7%); 8 of them (24.2%) mentioned being from the area of Human Resources Management; 1 (3.03%) of Psychology and 2 (6.1%) of Sociology. Finally, it is pertinent to mention that most of them had more than 20 years of professional experience (n = 19; 57.6%), and only 1 of them (3.03%) reported having a professional experience of less than 5 years.

The analysis of the interviews was done through an analysis of thematic and mixed content. It was based, on the one hand, on the respondents' answers to the questions asked in the interviews (bottom-up approach) and, on the other hand, the theoretical framework, general objective and specific objectives of the research concerned ("Top down approach"). In addition, the quality criteria were taken into account, with an inter-judges agreement being reached, with 3 judges obtaining a loyalty index with a value of 0.82. In this sense, it is considered that this value assumes the character of "excellent", since it is superior to the value of 0.75 defended in the literature.

Three dimensions were constructed, each consisting of different categories and sub-categories. However, in this work we will only consider one of the dimensions, called: Relationship between 360-degree evaluation and Organizational Communication. This will be shown below:

Relationship between 360-degree evaluation and organizational communication:

Categories	Units of analysis by the professors (n)	Units of analysis by the trainers (n)	Units of analysis by the communications managers (n)	Totality of units of analysis (n)
7. Extended Feedback	21	19	17	57
8. Transparency	12	25	13	50
9. Effective Communication of Supervisor	40	10	13	63

Extended feedback

In this case, the interviewees point out that the 360-degree evaluation allows a greater number of perspectives of the different evaluators, when compared to other evaluation methods like the traditional top-down evaluation: "A 360-degree evaluation can give us a much more global picture of what our peers, our subordinates and our leaders think about us. "(P12); "And therefore, I think it's a lot ... I think it's much richer [referring to the 360-degree evaluation] than top-down evaluation."

This was one of the categories that had a higher frequency, making it possible to perceive that all respondents consider the 360-degree evaluation very important, because it provides a extended feedback.

Transparency

The participants involved in this research describe the 360-degree evaluation as a transparent process, because it allows to understand the role of each of the organizational actors, allowing a greater accountability and cohesion: "And I understand that in the face of this situation [referring to the 360-degree evaluation], more transparency needs to be fostered, so that sharing of information and accessibility of continuous feedback contributes to this transparency" (P8); "We send out a communication that is the same for everyone, eventually, for a department or for an entire company. Therefore, this transparency is ... it is important and relevant. "(P28).

The question of transparency was also widely mentioned by the interviewees, considering that the 360-degree evaluation becomes very useful for more effective communication.

Effective supervisor communication

The experts report a greater sharing of power in the case of the 360-degree evaluation, when compared with the traditional evaluation. This greater sharing of power is related to the evaluation of the supervisors, making them perform their functions more carefully, including in the communication they establish with their subordinates: "It is better when more people participate in the 360-degree evaluation, because in this case the supervisors may know what they actually need to improve in their communication!"(P14); "Of course, if i'm being evaluated by people who have a position below mine, I have to have some kind of care and behavior with these people than if I'm not being evaluated by them." (P22).

This was one of the categories most frequently, which becomes quite important, since it is directly related to one of the objectives of this research. It can then be realized that the application of the 360-degree evaluation may be beneficial for the communication that the supervisors assume.